QIṢṢAT AL-GHARĀNĪQ IN GLIMPSES OF HISTORY

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ABSTRACT:
Several chronic narratives in the historiographies are totally ineffective because of their mythical trends. Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq is a similar narrative, in which the Holy Prophet. (PBUH) is accused to be inspired by Satan. As he recited some verses of Sūrah al-Najm, Satan, reportedly, mixed some of his words – praising the pagan idols – in the divine revelation. Due to the alleged satanic words "gharānīq al-ʿulā" it is also called "story of the cranes", which has been titled later as 'Satanic Verses' by orientalists. The historical complications of this story are being tried to resolve here in this study. The appraisal of the history of this story would be very significant and helpful to clear the ambiguities about the basic Islamic thought of the preservation of the Holy Qur'ān and impeccability of the Holy Prophet. (PBUH) Historically, this story has faced huge ups and downs. With a careful analysis of the early, medieval and modern periods of Islamic history, the inceptors, endorsers and the nullifiers of this story have been exposed here. Its historic complications reveal that this story was neglected from its very outset. Almost the entire Islamic history evidenced the negation of this story. Thus, the propagation of this story has no authentic background.

Keywords: *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq, Islamic historiography, Classic Islamic Period, Medieval History, Modern Era.*

INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

According to some accounts of Islamic history, a story remained in the literary circles of some of early biographers and exegetes. Which denotes the alleged deception of the Holy Prophet (Peace and

greetings of Allāh be upon him) by Satan. In spite of having a very doubtful status, a couple of narrations[1] – of Ibn Saʿd (d.230 AH) and al-Ṭabarī (d.310 AH) – expose this story, in which it is stated that the Messenger of Allāh (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) was feeling himself quite isolated due to the rejection of his message by his own tribesmen. As a result, he wanted to have an injunction to attract his pagan nation. In these reports, it is alleged too, that while reciting the following verses of Sūrah al-Najm:

أَفَرَءَيْتُمُ اللَّٰتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ وَمَنَوٰةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰٓ ـ (20-19:53) (*A-fa-ra'aytum al-Lāt wa al-ʿUzzā. Wa Manāt al-thālithat al-ukhrā) "Have ye thought upon al-Lāt and al-ʿUzza? And al-Manāt, the third, the other?"[2]*

The Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) spoke the following words in favour of the Arab idols: [3] تلك الغرانيق العلى وان شفاعتهن لترتجى (*Tilk al-gharānīq al-ʿulā, wa inna shafāʿatahunna la-turtajā) "Indeed, they are high flying cranes, and their intercession is to be hoped for", which were allegedly interjected by Satan. After reciting the rest of the Sūrah, the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) prostrated, and was followed also by non-believers. It is narrated too that later Gabriel realized him about the Satanic intervention and abrogated these satanic phrases by the following verses of Sūrah al- Ḥajj:* وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّىٰ أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنسَخُ اللهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللهُ آيَاتِهِ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ o لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ o وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ. (54-52:22)

(Wa mā arsalnā min qablika min rasūl wa lā nabiyyin illā idhā tamannā alqa al-shayṭānu fī umniyyatihī fa yansakhu Allāhu mā yulqi al-shayṭānu thumma yuḥkimu Allāhu āyātihī wa Allāhu ʿalīmun ḥakīm li yajʿala mā yulqī al-shayṭānu fitnat lilladhīna fī qulūbihim maraḍun wa al-qāsiyati qulūbuhum wa inna al-ẓẓālimīna lafī shiqāqim baʿīd wa li yaʿlam alladhīna 'ūtu al-ʿilma 'annahu al-ḥaqqu min Rabbika fa yu'minū bihi fa tukhbita lahū qulūbuhum wa inna

Allāha lahād i alladhīna āmanū ilā ṣirāṭ i mmustaqīm.) "Never sent We a messenger or a Prophet before thee but when he recited (the message) Satan proposed (opposition) in respect of that which he recited thereof. But Allāh abolisheth that which Satan proposeth. Then Allāh establisheth His revelations, Allāh is Knower, Wise. That He may make that which devil proposeth a temptation for those in whose hearts is a disease, and those whose hearts are hardened- Lo! The evil-doers are in open schism. And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it is the truth from thy Lord, so that they may believe therein and their hearts may submit humbly unto Him. Lo! Allāh verily is guiding those who believe unto a right path."

In this dubious episode of Islamic history, the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) is exhibited completely deceived and strayed by Satan in the 'divinely' protected process of the Divine revelation, even against the actual spirit of Islam as said:

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ. وَمَا يَنطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰٓ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ. (53:2-4)

(Mā ḍalla ṣāhibu-kum wa mā ghawā wa mā yanṭiqu ʿan al-hawā in huwa illā waḥyun yūḥā) "Your companion (Muhammad) has not strayed, nor has he erred, nor does he speak out of his Desire. This is nothing but a Revelation that is conveyed to him". Thus, in the presence of such a plenty of other solid reasons, most of the scholars denied this story outrightly, which indicates its apocryphal status. But instead of discussing these rebuttals, only the historic ups and downs and the chronic treatment of the story of Gharānīq are being unveiled here in this study.

HISTORICAL FLUCTUATION OF THE STORY:

For getting a vast information about Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq i.e. the story of the cranes, the history of this narrative should be enlightened. The historical aspects of Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq can be quite helpful to understand the origin of the story. When was this story initiated? How was this narrative continued throughout the entire Muslim history? The treatment of this story by different historical scholars of Islam, and the acceptance and rebuttal of the story of the cranes,

are all the queries to solve and answer. The endeavor to meet the chronology of the narrative of satanic verses is being made in the following steps.

INCEPTION OF NARRATION:

The narratives about Islamic origins made them seemingly a complex version. Most of the content about Islamic phenomenon is displayed neither contemporary with the events nor consistent in what they describe. But this claim is not an outright fact of Islamic historiography, which can be defined as the written material of Muslim historians concerning the events of the early period of Islam. Although, a number of criticisms – like the gap between the events and their recording, the non-survival of earlier historical compilations in intact position and their summarizations in the later digests, the oral narration of many reports, the incompatibility of non-Muslim sources, forged reports, political and economic influences on the historians etc. – all have been imposed on the historical writings of Islam, but these did not affect it beyond a certain limit.

As far as the narration of the claim of satanic verses incident is concerned, it seems holding an obscure historic background. With the intelligent observation of history, the very outset of this story seems to be quite delayed in the Islamic historiography. This may be proved so that, as a matter of fact, most of the known earliest Islamic historical writings – just like as "al-silk al-nāẓim fī akhbār al-awwal wa al-ākhir", "Ḥadīth ḥamāmat al-dhahabi" and "Sīrat al-Iskandar" of Kaʿb al-Aḥbār (d.34 AH), "al-Masā'il" (Questions to the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him)) of ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sallām (d.43 AH), and "al-Mathālib" of Zayd Ibn Abī Sufyān (d.53 AH)[4] – had nothing to do with the narration of this incident. Similarly, the scholars from the earlier sixth and seventh decades of Islam, like Ṣuḥār al-ʿAbdī (d.50s AH), ʿAbīd Ibn Sharya (d.60s AH), Dhaghfal al-Shaybānī (d.65 AH)[5] and others had not presented this incident in their respective works. Likewise, in the last decade of the

first century too, this narrative is not found to be treated in Islamic historiography. The historians like Saʿīd Ibn al-Musayyab (d.94 AH) in his biography of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him), Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr (d.95 AH) in his tafsīr work and ʿUbayd Allāh Ibn Kaʿb (d.97 AH) in his maghāzī versions have not been sighted narrating any sort of this story.

Subsequently, in the 2nd century of Islam, Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq (d.151 AH) – a name who has been considered as the main source of this infamous narrative by different later narrators like al-Wāqidī (d.207 AH), Ibn Saʿd (d.230) and al-Ṭabarī (d.310 AH) – has dealt with this story to a certain extent, but his work cannot be found in an intact form now. His work might be found in the recensions of Salamah Ibn al-Faḍl (d.191 AH) and Yūnus b. Bukayr [6] in anecdote form. A French orientalist Alfred Guillaume (1888 – 1965 AD) has also claimed to reconstruct Ibn Isḥāq's "Sīrat Rasūl Allāh" in the name of "The Life of Muhammad" in 1955.

Anyhow, a number of objections has also been raised on the works and even on the personality of Ibn Isḥāq. He is widely criticized by Ḥadīth scholars for quoting from anonymous and unreliable people, and for copying down the reports of others without observing their time.[7] Ibn Isḥāq's status became so dubious, that he had been alleged simply for transmitting lies [8] because of not taking sufficient care of chains of transmission. He was also a storyteller like his father, who was a son of a practicing Christian Yasār. Ibn Isḥāq was said to have been exiled from Madīnah for narrating a false report from a woman Fātima bint al-Mundhir, the wife of Hishām Ibn ʿUrwah.[9] So with the help of above appraisal of 2nd century's main source of Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq, the point can be reached that the initiation of this narrative in 2nd century is quite obscure, doubtful and questionable.

So, how to assess the inceptive era of this story, is still a problematic issue. Another factor in the inception of this narrative is of Quṣṣāṣ i.e. the storytellers. The Quṣṣāṣ of earlier Islamic era had participated adequately in its narration. Lexically, the Quṣṣāṣ has

largely been associated with story-telling and identified by most of the scholars as 'story-tellers'.[10] This word is taken from the word "Qaṣṣā" as "to tell stories". These Quṣṣāṣ were designated as 'Wuʿʿāz' or preachers to teach the simple masses in an interesting manner. Just as Muḥammad b. Qays (d.126 AH) – who was also a source of Ibn Isḥāq – was appointed by Umayyads as a public preacher in order to teach the Holy Qur'ān "(where the story teller would recite passages from it after prayers for common people), and particularly for its interpretation."[11]

The importance of the Quṣṣāṣ in the early Islamic history was generally of low regard. They were charged with a number of accusations, like spreading false ideas and misleading the Muslims. They were also considered responsible for collecting different types of stories and proliferating them without exercising any critical investigation of their content.[12] On the other hand, it is as clear as the day-light, that a number of Quṣṣāṣ had played a significant role in the inception of narration of this story, just like as we see Mujāhid b. Jabr (d.102 AH), Muḥammad Ibn Kaʿb al-Qurazī (d.108 AH), Qatādah b. Diāmah (d.117 AH), Muḥammad b. Qays al-Madanī (d.126 AH), Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq (d.151 AH) and many others in the transmission chains. This would result in the obscurity of the start of its narration.

Thus, it would be quite convenient to reach a conclusion that the beginning of this story, in the narrative form, goes to 3rd century of Islamic history, with having some branches of narration in the late 2nd century. The works of abovementioned earlier scholars cannot be found in their original forms, and the attribution of this narrative to the 2nd century scholars, like Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq, also becomes dubious, because of the contemporary and later criticism on them. Their role of being Quṣṣāṣ had also been adduced by several researchers to nullify their narrative of satanic verses. From the very 5th year of prophetic call of the Messenger of Allāh (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) – when the verses of Surah al-Najm were revealed – no clues of its narration can be found in the entire

Prophetic and Righteous Caliphs' era. So, how can such an important incident – if it were held – be invisible in that whole period?

CLASSIC ISLAMIC SCHOLARSHIP

In the late 2nd and throughout the whole 3rd century of Islamic history, the story of satanic verses incident had become able to be placed in the written corpuses of some scholars. The earlier scholars like Muḥammad Ibn ʿUmar al-Wāqidī (d.207 AH), Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd al-Baṣrī (d.230 AH) and Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d.310 AH) ventured to transmit this narrative of satanic verses in their respective compilations of biography of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him), exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān, and in their historical works.

The famous Madinan historian and biographer of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) Muḥammad Ibn ʿUmar al-Wāqidī adduced the narrative of this incident presumably in his lost Kitāb al-Mubtadā.[13] Al-Wāqidī – who studied earlier at Madīnah – enjoyed the patronage of Abbāsid caliphs and is primarily well-known for his extant book Kitāb al-Tārīkh wa al-Maghāzī, which is the only preserved part of his corpus.[14] He drew the traditions and contents from Ibn Isḥāq for the sake of writing his books, to a certain extent. Several works about Islamic conquests have been attributed to Ibn ʿUmar al-Wāqidī, but unfortunately, most of them has been considered unreliable now.[15] Regarding his scholarly reliability and for taking stories from different people and making some alterations[16] – in order to create some interest – al-Wāqidī had been facing a great criticism. The great canonical Ḥadīth book author al-Nasā'ī (d.303 AH) has included al-Wāqidī in the four liars[17] known for fabricating the traditions of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him). In fact, al-Wāqidī used to gather different accounts of an event into a single combined report and transmit it with a collective chain of transmission.

Another earlier Islamic scholar of history Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd Ibn Manīʿ al-Baṣrī (d.230 AH) has a notable relation with the story of

Gharānīq. His name is always associated with his mentor al-Wāqidī. "Ibn Saʿd is often designated by the title 'Kātib al-Wāqidī' (Scribe al-Wāqidī), as Ibn Saʿd seems depended heavily on al-Wāqidī as a source in his compilations, this may indicate Kātib as a student-copyist for his teacher al-Wāqidī."[18] Thus, Ibn Saʿd transmitted a plenty of traditions from his mentor al-Wāqidī, as he authored the first major biographical compilation of the historical personalities of Muslims in the first two centuries. That was named as "Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā". He narrated the alleged story of satanic verses in the Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah section of his compilation[19] while presenting some reports from al-Wāqidī.

The narrative of the story of satanic verses jumped to its peak in result of its narration by an earlier and famous late 3rd century exegete, historian and a member of the scholarly community of Abbasid Baghdad, known as Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d.310 AH).[20] Actually, he was the first person, who, unintentionally, gave this narrative an extant form, which can be easily sighted in his exegetic and historic corpuses. Al-Ṭabarī narrated the satanic verses incident in his exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān namely "Jāmiʿ al-Bayān"[21] and in his universal history the "Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk"[22] from Ibn Isḥāq and Muḥammad Ibn Kaʿb al-Qurazī. With the edge of al-Ṭabarī's narration, the narrative of satanic verses adopted an intact and extant shape in the earlier period viz late 3rd century. This had provided the foundations to the later accusing scholarship to erect their edifices of accusations. But no one of them had put even a little attention to Ṭabarī's justification in the introduction of his book, of narrating such a story.

Therefore, the narrative of satanic verses came into a solid written form, exactly in the 3rd century of Islam. The abovementioned scholars of earlier history took part in narrating and spreading Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq. But, contrary to this, the rejection of this episode was carried on also, in that very age. As Abū Bakr Muḥammad b.

Isḥāq Ibn Khuzaymah (d.311 AH) – a contemporary of al-Ṭabarī – commented on this story and neglected it out rightly. He was also a great admirer and friend of al-Ṭabarī, but on this issue, he had a point of view entirely opposite to him. He, Ibn Khuzaymah, was said to be the first man who literally condemned this narrative of satanic interpolation and conceived it as an entire forgery. According to al-Shawkānī (d.1250 AH), Ibn Khuzaymah held that the story of cranes is the invention of 'Zanādiqah'. Therefore, it is quite obvious now that the rejection of this narrative was carried on from the very age of inception of this incident.*

QIṢṢAT AL-GHARĀNĪQ IN MEDIEVAL ERA:

In the early medieval period of Islam and contemporary to the era of al-Ṭabarī, the accounts related to the satanic verses incident were being rebutted. These accounts, of no worth, were never included in any one of the canonical compilations of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) in those times. The authors like Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d.256 AH), Muslim b. Ḥujjāj al-Nayshābūrī (d.261 AH) and others had not deemed the traditions of this story up to the mark. Due to the defective chains of narration, this episode of satanic verses could not be able to draw the attentions of anyone of the Ḥadīth scientists and of the majority of other scholars as well. A 4th century prominent figure, Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Naḥḥās (d.338 AH) narrated this story through a tradition

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[*] . A plural form of the word زنديق 'zindīq/zandik'. Initially, before Islam, it was used to denote the follower of Manichaeism, but after the rise of Islam, its meaning has encircled Gnostic Dualists, Atheists, Agnostics and free thinkers. In the later times, even up to today, this word has come to be synonymous with 'Atheist' and 'Irreligious'.

in his book 'al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh'[23] *to support the position that the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) did not utter those satanic words. Another scholar of that time, Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn ʿAlī al-Rāzī al-Jaṣṣāṣ (d.370 AH) took this incident in a common narrative sense and presented the story of the cranes without any chain of transmission. He narrated it directly from the work of Ḥassan al-Baṣrī (d.110 AH), which begins with a phrase "It is related from al- Ḥassan".*[24]

The mid of the 5th century had also some scholars, who took and narrated this incident with incomplete chains like al-Jaṣṣāṣ. Abū al-Ḥassan al-Māwardī (d.450 AH) was one of them, who argued in favour of this narrative in his exegesis of the Qur'ān "al-Nukat wa al-ʿUyūn" without any chain of transmission.[25] *Another literary figure belonged to Khurāsān Aḥmad b. al-Ḥussayn al-Bayhaqī (d.458 AH) adduced this story in a different way, that instead of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him), Satan uttered the satanic verses and cast them on the tongues of the disbelievers or in the ears of the disbelievers.*[26] *In the same contrast, another commentator of the occasions of revelations ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Wāhidī (d.468 AH) cited a tradition from Mujāhid's commentary of the verse no. 45 of Surah al-Zumar. Without any chain of narrators, he brought it in his middle tafsīr of the Holy Qur'ān namely "al-Wāsiṭ".*[27]

Similarly, the scholars like Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad Ibn al-ʿArabī (d.542 AH), Abū al-Faḍl al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d.544 AH), Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn ʿUmar b. al-Ḥassan al-Rāzī (d.606 AH) and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī (d.671 AH) had also narrated this incident of satanic interpolation but in an opposite way. They argued against the authenticity of this

story. As the most comprehensive argumentation against the originality of this story has been presented by the Andalusian and Mālikī scholar al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ al-Mālikī (d.544 AH). The story was denounced by him on the basis of the violation of doctrine of the Prophets' infallibility, and secondly, due to the incomplete and defective chains of transmission. He, of course, came on the scene as the most influential opponent of the incident, as he states about it, "the report was not transmitted by any of the people of the truth rather these were commentators and the historians, who have been obsessed with it and it's like."[28]

In the late 6th century of Islamic history, Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī has commented about the incident's narrative in his exegesis "Mafātīh al-Ghayb". While arguing from the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah, he stated in the commentary of the verse of Sūrah al-Ḥajj 22:52 that this incident is an outright fabrication. Another famous name of the medieval era of Muslims, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī had took entirely a different stance in the whole narrative. He is of the view that the word gharānīq implies on the angels, as he cited from al-Ḥassan that he meant the "gharānīq" as the "angels". Al-Qurṭubī quoted this in his Tafsīr Jāmiʿ li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān as "al-Ḥassan said, 'By gharānīq al-ʿulā he means, the angels'".[29]

The great Ḥanbalī medieval Muslim theologian and reformer Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728 AH) treated this story not entirely but in some parts on different places. He was of the view that the deception of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) by Satan should not be problematic at any scale, because the recantation of the satanic verses by the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) displays his veracity.[30] Having quite

different Ḥadīth methodology, he conceived that the common meaning in different reports should be noticed compulsorily. Another historian and lexicographer of that very 8th century, Nizām al-Dīn al-Naysābūrī (d.728 AH) had also narrated this incident in his Gharāʿib al-Qur'ān adding a new motif of a devil called 'al-Abyaḍ',[31] who came to the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) in the form of Gabriel. But all from this author cited directly from Ibn ʿAbbās without any linking personality.

Moreover, the later medieval Muslim scholars like ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl Ibn Kathīr (d.774 AH), Shāfiʿī scholar Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d.852 AH) and an Egyptian historian, biographer and jurist Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Reḥmān Ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī (d.911 AH) also wrestled with the story of satanic verses in their own styles. Ibn Kathīr, in his commentary, pointed out the traditions of this story as mursals, because the story has been transmitted through incomplete chains, without having any companion of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) in those. Whereas, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī declared all narrations weak, but he considered Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr's chain quite strong. He also conceived the incident authentic due to its narration from several chains. In presence of multiple chains, this incident has two Mursal narrations as well. Al-Suyūṭī had also narrated the story of satanic verses incident on several occasions in his exegesis.

A report from Ibn Abī Ḥātim was brought by him in the commentary of the Holy Qur'ān Al-Isrā 17:73 in a summarized version.[32] He was also of the view that these traditions should be narrated in regard to occasions of revelation.[33] Thus, in the medieval ages of Islam, the story of Gharānīq has been included in historical literature to a great extent, either in its argumentative form, or in refutative form. Most

of the literary personalities of that time exercised their informative skills in regard of this narrative and arrived on different results.

MODERN ISLAMIC THOUGHT:

The opportunities of scrutinizing dubious issues, have been remained extensively available to the scholars of modern times. In order to distinguish the facts from fictions, and historical myths from realities, many sets of rules and regulations have come into existence. The Muslim scholars have been striving in this context quite untiringly. As a result of these efforts, one can easily reach the exact position of any narrative, with the help of which the historical status of any doctrine or quotation may be challenged.

The narrative of satanic verses incident is felt quite problematic by the scholars of modern times. The support for this narrative became very rare in the last four or five centuries, because allowing the pagan deities to intercede with Allāh has been taken precisely in the sense of heretics. The reason behind this is the faith of the omnipotence of Allāh. So therefore, the Muslims have simply dismissed the accounts of this story throughout the history. As the two writers Michael Fischer and Mehdi Abedi, writing on the issue of the historical account of so-called satanic verses, stated, "The story that Muhammad (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) could have used the satanic suggestion is rejected by almost all exegetes, but the fact that the story persists as a subject of exegetes."[34]

An impartial study of classic and modern period's literature of Islam reveals that most of the Islamic scholars have rejected this story, not without reasons and logic. The copiousness of this sort of rejecting literature, in the recent times, is as clear as a bright day. Some of them are notables with their compilations likewise, Muḥammad Ibn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Al-Shawkānī (d.1250 AH) in his "Fatḥ al-Qadīr",[35]

Abū al-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ālūsī (d.1270 AH) in his exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān Rūḥ al-Mʿānī,[36] *Siddiq Hassan Khan (d.1307 AH) in his tafsīr "Fatḥ al-Bayān", Muḥammad ʿAbduh al-Miṣrī al-Imām (d.1323 AH) in his monograph "Risālah Khāṣṣah fī hādhi al-Qiṣṣah" and many others.*

Many inconsistencies and versions of the story of satanic verses have also been pointed out by Muhammad Hussain Haykal (1888 – 1956 CE), which argue against the story. The inclusion of such sort of false verses is neglected by the contextual flow of Surah al-Najm itself. Haykal – while declaring the story inconsistent with the Holy Prophet's (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) life, and the spirit of the Divine messege as well – quotes ʿAbduh al-Miṣrī as, "Arabs have nowhere described their gods in such terms as 'al-Gharānīq' neither in their poetry, nor in their speeches or traditions. Rather, the word al-ghurnūq or al-gharnīq was the name of a black or white water bird, sometimes given figuratively to the handsome blond youth".[37] *In connection with it, the originality of the traditions of this story is well recounted by him. Haykal got the point that these infamous and invented verses have no historical basis.*

Furthermore, in the modern times of Islam, further critical examination of the story of the cranes has been launched by most of the scholars, as for instance, Syed Abū al-Aʿlā Mawdūdī (1903 – 1979 CE). He evaluated the narration of this story quite thoroughly in his commentary "Tafhīm al-Qur'ān". He stated the reason of the prostration of disbelievers with the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) as, "the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) was reciting a forceful piece of the eloquent Qur'ān in a very impressive manner.

Naturally the occasion produced an emotional effect and all the listeners instinctively fell down in prostration along with him. It was because of such ecstasies produced by the Holy Prophet's (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) recital of the Qur'ān, due to this the disbelievers dubbed him as a sorcerer".[38] *He furtherly, enlightened the irrationality of this story, as the narrated time of the story, was the time of the first migration to Abyssinia, which was taken place in the month of Rajab of the 5th year of the Prophethood. The related verses 73 to 75 of Surah al-Isra' – which reproving the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) – came down in the 11th or 12th year. Furthermore, the verse no. 22 – which is reported to abrogate satanic verses – of Surah al-Hajj was descended in the first year of hijrah with a difference of almost nine years from the so-called occurrence of the incident. So how can a normal man believe that the satanic verses had been remained with the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) and his companions un-abrogated for a long period of nine years?*

Therefore, a number of other instances can be adduced of scholars, who rejected the authenticity of this incident, again as Muḥammad Nāsir al-Dīn al-Albānī (1914 – 1999 CE) wrote a monograph against this story namely "Nasb al-Majānīq li Nasf Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq" (The hoisting of Catapults for the destruction of the story of the Cranes), and Sāleḥ Aḥmad al-Shāmī also wrote his monograph "al-Gharānīq: Qiṣṣat Dākhilā alā Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah". Likewise, Dr. Mohar Ali (1932 – 2007 CE) argues that as Ibn al-Kalbī stated that the Qurayshites used to recite the couplet of satanic verses in praise of their deities during the circumambulation of Kaʿbah in the olden times, and it is also known that they used to make noise and

disturbances during the prayers and recitations of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him), so it is quite clear that some disbelievers would have interrupted the recitation of Surah al-Najm and shouted this couplet.[39] So, therefore, a plenty of reasons and deficiencies in this narrative evoked the scholars a lot to refute the authenticity of this story and to rebut the accusations, which the story has put on Islam.

CONCLUSION

As the result of the above comprehensive historic description, it becomes quite unambiguous, that the story of al-Gharānīq has a superficial historic worth. Right from the 5th year of prophetic call – on which occasion the story is alleged – the whole Prophetic and Caliphs' period is devoid of any clue regarding this story. The followers' period comprising of the rest of the 1st and 2nd century has also nothing to narrate this sort of any incident. Its rare roots of initiation may be traced in the historiography of the only late 2nd and 3rd centuries of Islam, when some scholars tried to relate this story with the exegesis of Surah al-Najm and the migration of Muslims to Abyssinia. But the criticism on the above scholars and their sources made this narrative too very dubious and weak to transmit. Consequently, this story had not been supported unanimously during the last four to five centuries of Islam. And historical facts illuminate the historical horizon of this story covered with thick clouds of rejection.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To overcome further limitations in the way of truth regarding the historicity of the Gharānīq story, the following points are furthermore to be concentrated and inquired.

1. A vast study of the purposes behind the allegations of *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* must be carried on.
2. Some scholars' doubtful narrative of "the words of Satan were spoken through the tongues of non-believers" should also be appraised.
3. On what grounds, Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d.544 AH) denied this story, must be illuminated extensively.
4. It is necessary to combine the scattered thought of the great Ḥanbalī Muslim theologian Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728 AH) about *Gharānīq*.
5. In this regard, an analytical study of the monograph "*Nasb al-Majānīq li Nasf Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq*" (The hoisting of Catapults for the destruction of the story of the Cranes) by Nāsir al-Dīn al-Albānī (1914 – 1999 CE) can also be quite helpful.

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